

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 17095 141253Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11
AID-05 /083 W
-----051513 150606Z /20

R 141130Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6260
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17095

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: LOWMAN'S CALL ON THE MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. ORM OFFICE DIRECTOR LOWMAN JUNE 12 CALLED ON
PHIRAPHONG KASEMSI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTER-
NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS. LOWMAN THANKED PHIRAPHONG FOR
THAILAND'S BENEFICENT TREATMENT OF INDOCHINESE
REFUGEES. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE US PLANS TO HAVE
A CONTINUING PROGRAM FOR ACCEPTING THEM AS LONG AS
THE PROBLEM EXISTS. HE EXPECTED A FORMAL ANNOUNCE-
MENT OF THE NEW PROGRAM FOR 25,000 REFUGEES SOON;
PERHAPS DURING THE COURSE OF THE WEEK.

2. PHIRA SAID THAT THE NEW PROGRAM WAS ALSO ENCOURAGING
TO THE THAI. HE CONTENDED THAT, WITH THE GENERAL
ELECTIONS PROMISED FOR NEXT YEAR, THE REFUGEES MAY
BECOME A DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE. NOW WAS THE
TIME TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM. LOWMAN NOTED THAT
INTERNATIONALIZATION HAS ITS UPS AND DOWNS, AND THE US
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 17095 141253Z

GOVERNMENT IN THE PAST HAD TO RELY ON AD HOC PROGRAMS. N
UNITED STATES PLANNING NOW WAS FOR A CONTINUING PROGRAM
TO ASSIST INDOCHINESE REFUGEES.

3. PHIRA MADE TWO PROPOSALS. HE SAID THAT HE HOPED THIRD
COUNTRIES COULD MAKE A COLLECTIVE ARRANGEMENT TO ACCEPT
FURTHER REFUGEES, SO THAT THE THAI WOULD HAVE REASONABLE

BASIS ON WHICH TO MAKE PROJECTIONS OF THE AVAILABLE REFUGEE POPULATION REQUIRING LOCAL SETTLEMENT, PHIRA ALSO SUGGESTED THAT AN INFORMAL DIALOGUE BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF TRADITIONAL IMMIGRATION AND THOSE COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA REPRESENTED IN ASEAN AND FACED WITH THE REFUGEE INFLUX. PHIRA POINTED OUT THAT THE RTG WOULD RAISE THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROBLEM AT THE ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING BEING HELD IN THAILAND AT THE END OF THE WEEK.

4. LOWMAN SAID THAT THE NOTION OF A BROADER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES HAD BEEN CIRCULATING FOR SOME TIME. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT NOT ALL COUNTRIES WERE EQUALLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT IT. SOME, PAR-

TICULARLY FRANCE, WANT NO PUBLICITY ABOUT THEIR PROGRAMS. A CONFERENCE MIGHT THEREFORE BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. A LOW KEY EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN THESE TWO GROUPS UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE UNHCR, HOWEVER, MIGHT BE HELPFUL.

5. LOWMAN THEN ASKED ABOUT RTG PLANS FOR LOCAL SETTLEMENT. HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS SOME DISCREPANCY IN THE FIGURES THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT THE THAI WERE WILLING TO SETTLE LOCALLY, BUT WONDERED WHETHER IT WAS REALLY NECESSARY TO SETTLE ON A FIRM FINAL FIGURE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 17095 141253Z

BEFORE BEGINNING SOME SMALLER INITIAL PROJECTS. PHIRA SAID THAT THE RTG HAD GIVEN THE POLITICAL GREEN LIGHT TO LOCAL SETTLEMENT, BUT THAT "NO PLANNERS CAN PLAN WITHOUT FIGURES". RTG PLANNING WAS AFFECTED BY THREE FACTORS: THE HOPE THAT THE INFLOW WOULD DECREASE, A POLITICALLY IMPROVED CLIMATE WITH THAILAND'S NEIGHBORS THAT MIGHT RESULT IN CREDIBLE GUARANTEES OF REPATRIATION, AND ACCELERATED INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF REFUGEES. HE AGREED THAT IT WAS A WASTE OF HUMAN RESOURCES TO LET THE REFUGEES REMAIN IDLE IN THE CAMPS.

6. LOWMAN MENTIONED THAT SEVERAL LARGE AMERICAN COMPANIES HAD ASKED WHETHER THEY COULD GET PERMISSION TO RECRUIT WORKERS IN THAILAND AMONG THE REFUGEE POPULATION, AND RETURN THEM TO THAILAND WHEN THE JOBS WERE FINISHED. HE POINTED OUT THAT SUCH A PROCESS WOULD RESULT IN THE RAISING OF THE REFUGEES' SKILLS, AND AN IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR MATERIAL POSITION, BUT IT WOULD

NOT CONTRIBUTE TO RESETTLEMENT ABROAD. PHIRA SAID THAT THIS QUESTION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE INTERIOR MINISTRY, BUT THAT THE IDEA WAS

AN INTERESTING TNE. ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES WAS
THAI LAW, WHICH STATES THAT WHEN A DISPLACED
PERSON LEAVES THAILAND HE WILL NOT BE READMITTED.

7. COMMENT: PHIRA'S REHARKS REFLECT THAI RELUC-
TANCE TT COMMIT THEMSELVES TO BEGINNING THE PROCESS
OF LOCAL SETTLEMENT BEFORE THEY CAN CLEARLY SEE
A SOLUTION THAT WILL BRING THEIR REFUGEE POPULATION

IN BALANCE AND THEN REDUCE IT TO
"SATISFACTORY" LEVELS. WHILE HE ACCEPTS THE NEED TO
SETTLE SOME OF THESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND, THIS
CONDITION, IF RIGIDLY ADHERED TO, WOULD POSTPONE
INDEFINITELY THE BEGINNING OF SUCH A PROCESS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BANGKO 17095 141253Z

WHITEHOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, MEETINGS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO17095
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780249-0901
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780662/aaaacbpa.tel
Line Count: 137
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 82adbc89-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION HA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2364852
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: LOWMAN'S CALL ON THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
TAGS: SREF, OTRA, XC, XD, UNHCR, (LOWMAN, SHEPARD C)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/82adbc89-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014